

Linn County Continuum of Care Planning and Policy Council

2011 Housing Iowa Conference
September 8, 2011

Linn County CoC Mission

“To organize and maintain a strategic network of community interests in Linn County, Iowa, that will identify and coordinate housing and services to meet the specific needs of homeless people or those at-risk of becoming homeless.”

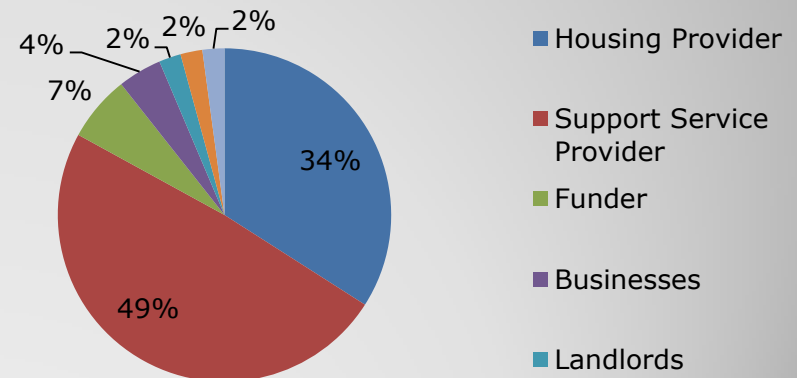
History- How did we get started?

- ❑ Strongly influenced by federal funding
 - ✓ Emergency Food and Shelter Grant
 - ✓ State Homeless Assistance Grant
- ❑ Linn County had capacity to...
 - ✓ write State Homeless Assistance Grant
 - ✓ administer funds
 - ✓ neutral party
 - ✓ Board of Supervisor commitment to human service activities
- ❑ Staff led by Linn County Community Service
 - ✓ Local Homeless Coordinating Board
 - ✓ Linn County Continuum of Care

How do we look today?

- ❑ Lead entities
 - ✓ Linn County Community Services (provides primary staff support- .25 FTE)
 - ✓ United Way of East Central Iowa
 - ✓ City of Cedar Rapids (Department of Development and Housing Services)

❑ Representation



Structure

Strengths

- ❑ Shared vision and goals
- ❑ Decision making based on data
- ❑ HUD Requirements
 - ❑ PIT
 - ❑ HMIS
 - ❑ Applications for funding
- ❑ Management
 - ❑ Planning
 - ❑ Coordination

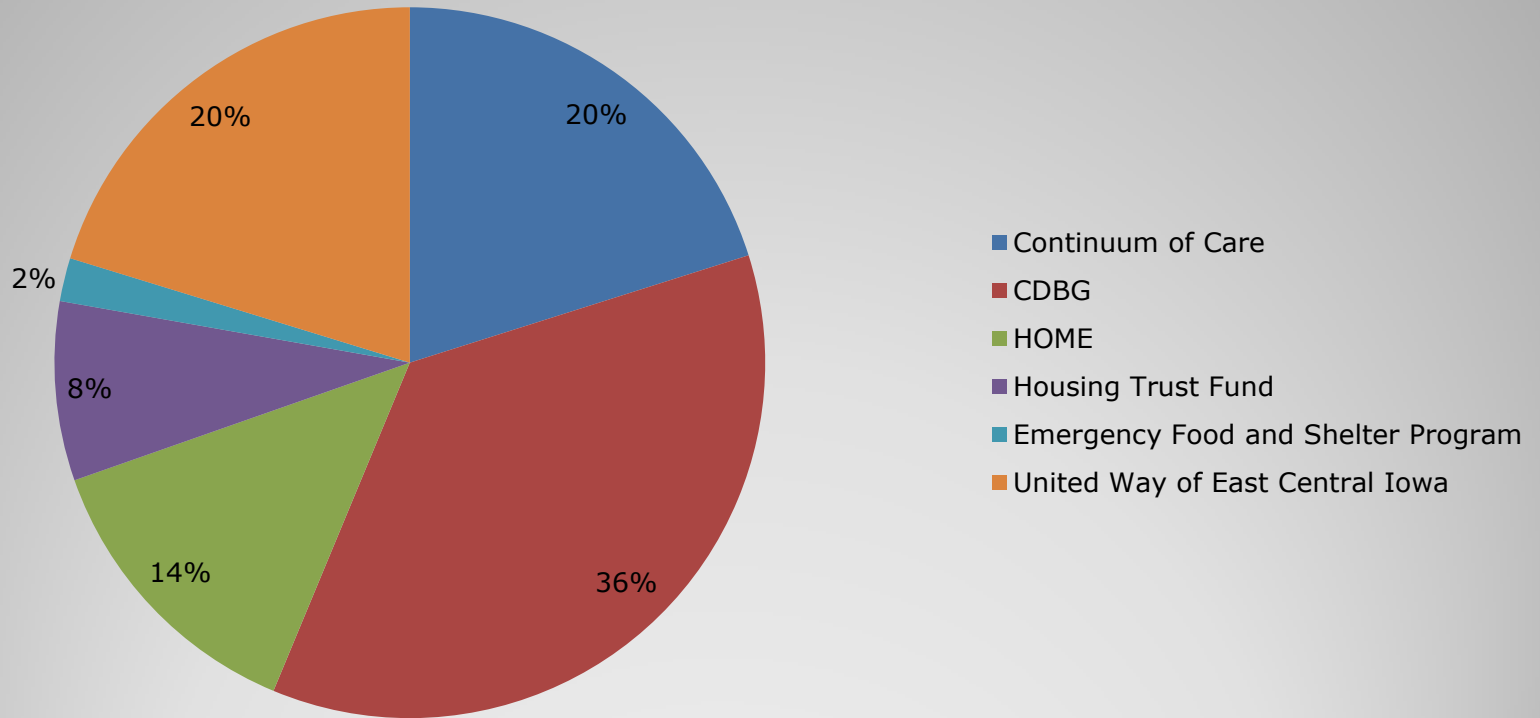
Components to address

- ❑ Diverse representation
- ❑ Formal structure to support systems planning
- ❑ System of oversight and management
 - ❑ Evaluation of system outcomes
 - ❑ Funding/Funders

CoC Functions

- Compile and share pertinent data
 - ✓ Point in Time Count
 - ✓ Individual and Family Need Survey
 - ✓ Linn County Homeless Data Report
- Conduct inventory of existing facilities and services
- Determine unmet needs through a “gaps analysis”
- Prioritize unmet needs and develop policies and plans to meet those needs without duplication of effort.
- Coordinate access to resources

Funding



Recommendation 1

Identify champions who interrogate reality and are committed to:

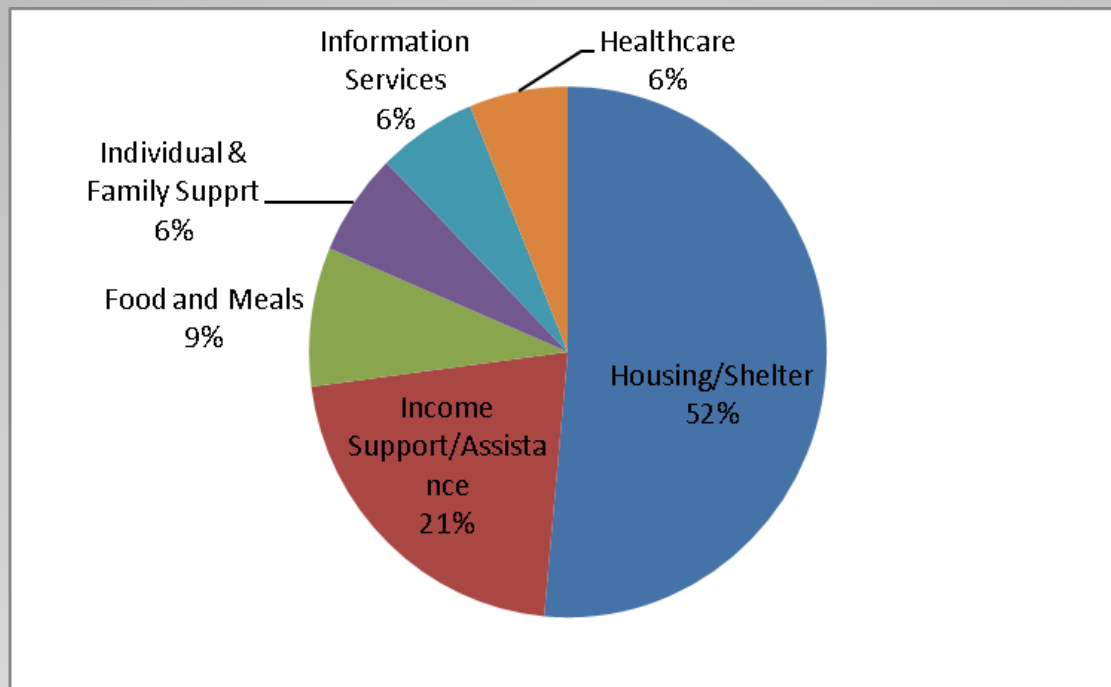
- Excellence
- Driven by data
- Outcome focused
- Represent diverse groups within the system
- Trustworthy/held with positive regard by their peers

Recommendation 2

Use data to guide planning and decision making

- Trends/ comparative data
- How many?
- Who?
- Underlying issues to near homelessness and homelessness

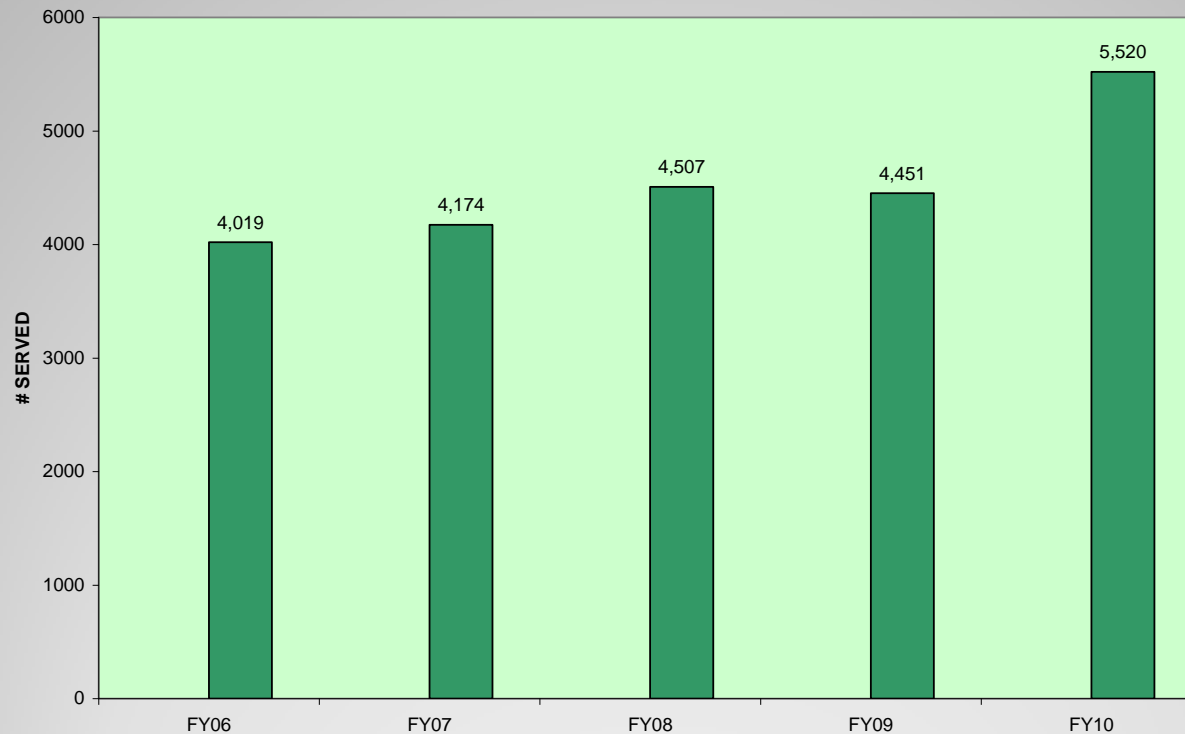
Requested Services in the 24 county service area



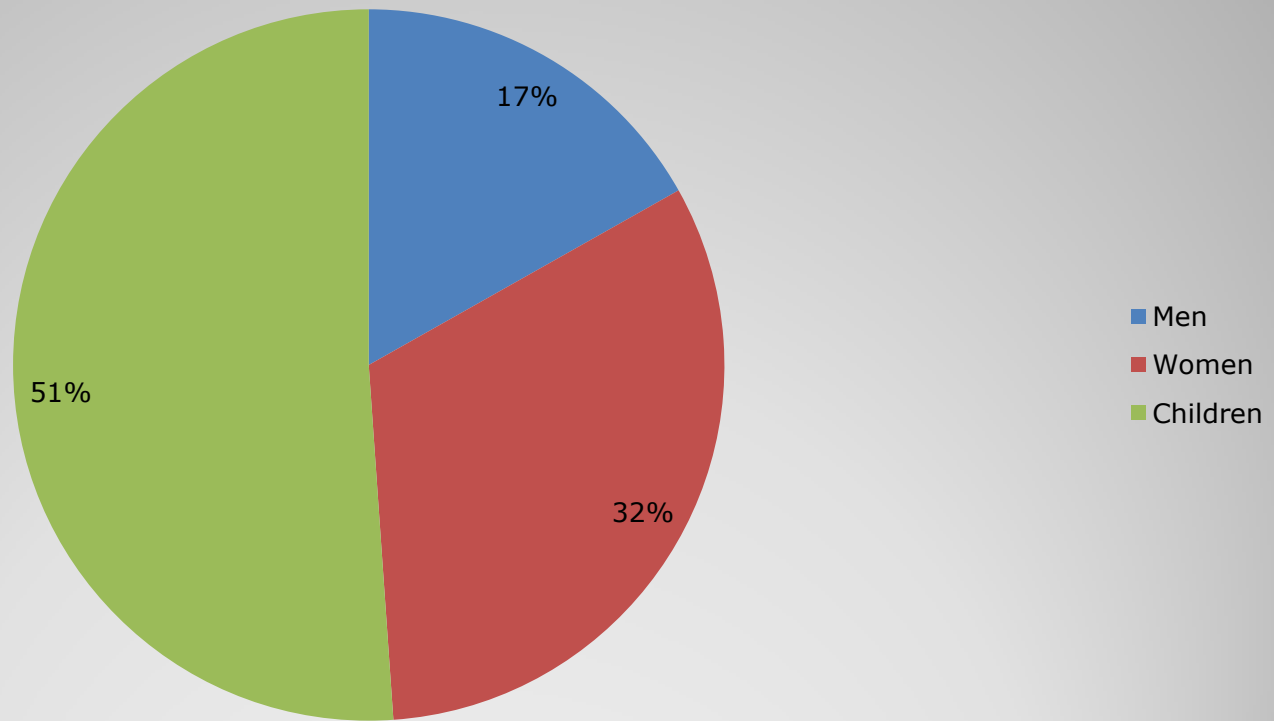
- Last year, 56,210 calls placed to the United Way 2-1-1 system.
- Nearly 23,100 of these calls were for Housing/Shelter services.

Comparative Data; How Many?

LINN COUNTY HOMELESS DATA

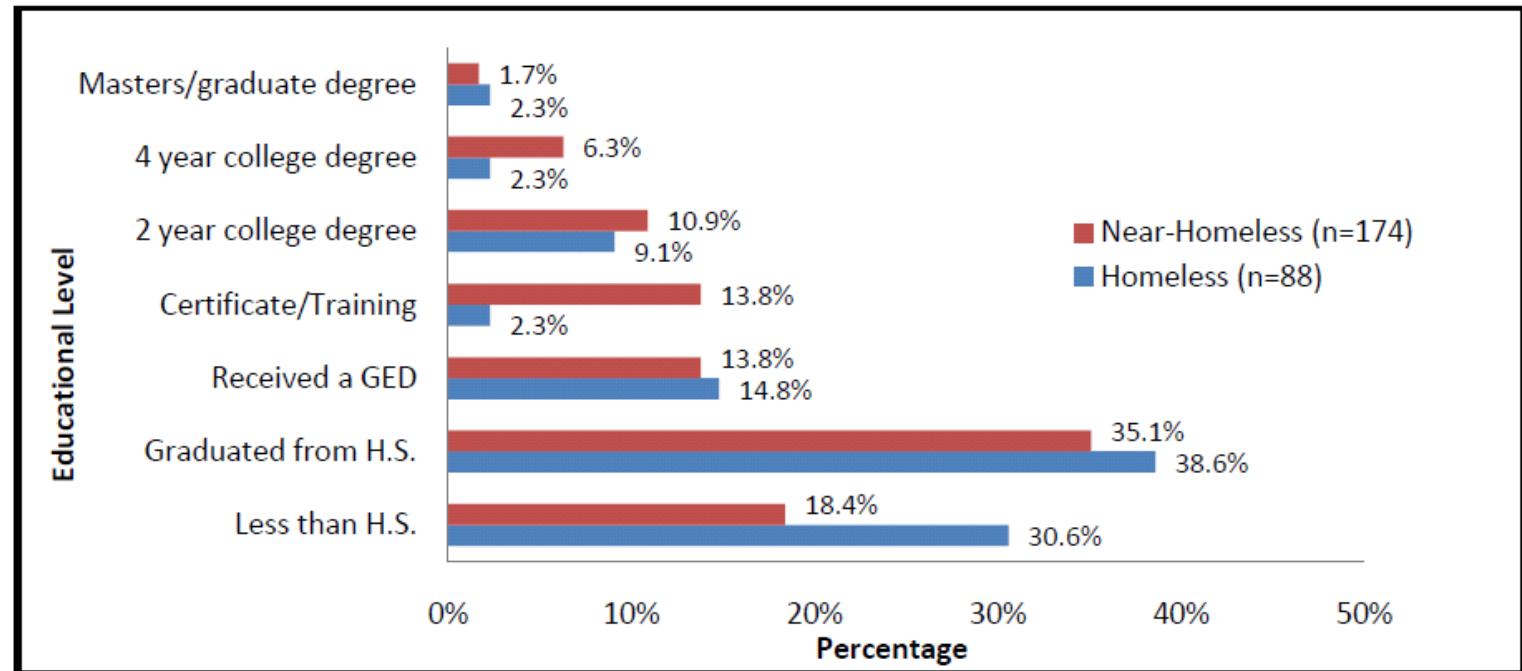


Who?



Underlying Issues: Education

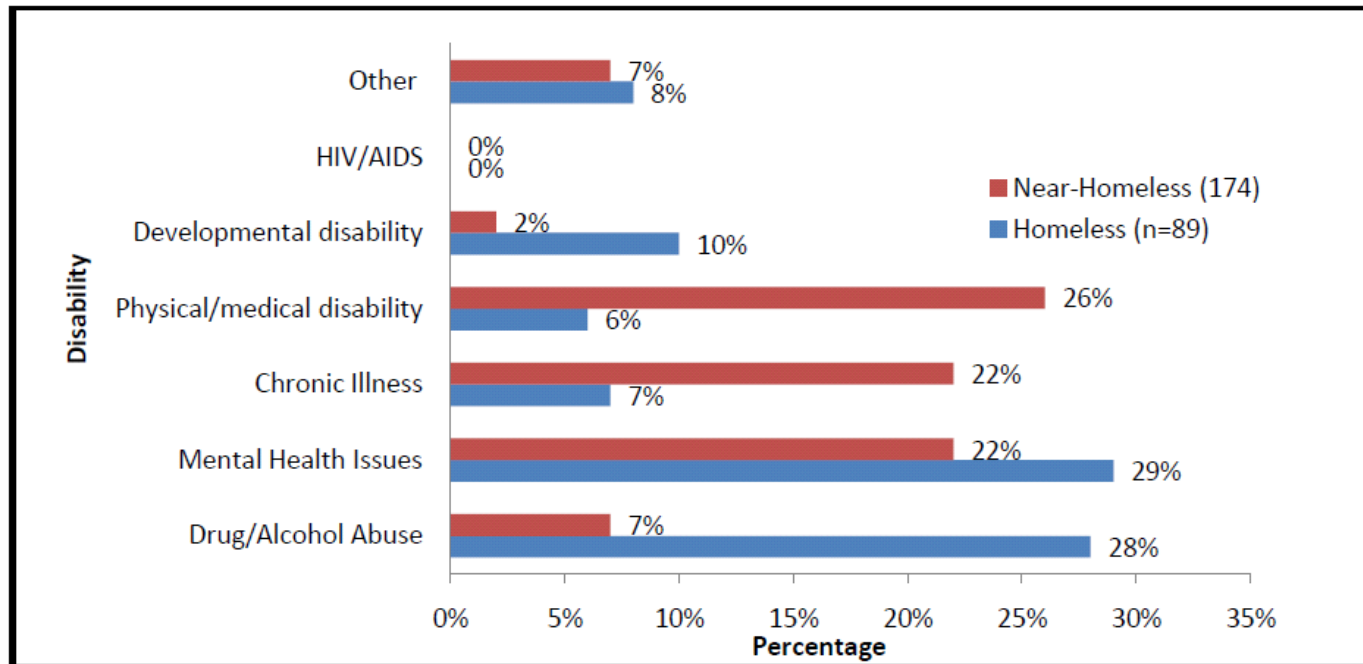
FIGURE 4: Educational Achievement



- **84%** of **homeless** individuals have not obtained an education beyond a high school diploma or GED.
- More **near-homeless** individuals (**32.7%**) have earned a Certificate/training or a college diploma than **homeless** individuals (**16%**).

Underlying Issues: Health

FIGURE 5: Disabilities/Health Issues



- **58.1%** of homeless and near-homeless individuals reported having a disability or health issue.
 - The most prominent issues identified by the **homeless** population were mental health issues (**29%**) and drug/alcohol issues (**28%**).
 - The most prominent issues identified by the **near-homeless** population were physical/medical disabilities (**26%**) and mental health issues and/or chronic illness (**22%**).

Recommendation 3

Prioritize strategies to pursue.

1 High Impact
Hardest to Implement

2 High Impact
Easy to Implement

3 Low Impact
Easy to Implement

4 Low Impact
Hard to Implement

Long Term Goal

Reduce the number of homeless persons in Linn County.

- Increased networking w/agencies
- Service limitations on consumers
- Focus on population issues
- Education component for consumers to meet/address goals
- Active outreach to meet individuals where they are
- Network with banks, mortgage lenders, landlords to catch people early
- Public education/advocacy about homelessness
- Service delivery model
- Visual tool
- Peer mentoring

Short-Term Goal #1

Increase the availability of quality, safe affordable housing.

- Re-start dialogue w/landlords & realtors
- Learn from local best practice models/pilots (CHOOSE & STRAP)
- Tenant/landlord academy
- Stream-line finance-tax credits, permits & inspection process for developers to build affordable housing units (CoC needs to bring a voice to City discussions)
- Better codes, regulation & enforcement regarding rental properties, focusing on quality & safe housing.

Short-Term Goal #2

Increase cooperation and communication between providers to provide efficient services.

- More communication between agencies
- Service Point
- 1 point of entry & 1 release form for the CoC
- Communicate with communities who have/are implementing a service delivery system using Service Point as a shared database
- Centralized case management
- Share guidelines for appropriate referral for shelter & supportive services
- Peer volunteers/mentor
- 24-hour crisis response

Prior to HEARTH Academy

Sub- Committee's:

- 1) "Access to Affordable Housing" Workgroup
- 2) "Provider Communications" Workgroup

Post HEARTH Academy

Possible Strategies and Focus:

- 1) Shelter Diversion
- 2) Expand Rapid Re-housing Capacity
- 3) Mainstream Employment

Recommendation 4

Develop an action plan with specific activities that will guide the planning group and result in measureable change.

Initiatives Underway

- Barrier Assessment Tool (pilot)
- Landlord Relationship Mapping

Recommendation 5

Evaluate progress and
measure change.

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